UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1998/NGO/102
6 April 1998

ENGLISH
Original: ENGLISH, FRENCH
AND SPANISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 16

RIGHTS OF PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL OR ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

Written statement submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[31 March 1998]

GE.98-11754 (E)

1. Year after year, the Commission on Human Rights has discussed, condemned and made recommendations about the military regime of Myanmar regarding all types of human rights abuses committed by its troops and authorities. Respected human rights organizations like Amnesty International, Asia Watch and the Society for Threatened Peoples have referred large dossiers of gross human rights violations in the Shan States, Karenni State, Karen State, and Mon State, not to mention the harassment of the democratic forces within the whole country. Despite such publicity, pressure and recommendations, the military regime of Myanmar remains indifferent and continues to push forward its policies of "Burmanization", coupled with ethnic cleansing and forced assimilation.

2. We would like to focus on the ethnic cleansing within the Shan States. Ethnic cleansing, in effect, is a strategic issue and encompasses self-determination (and all that it entails), human rights, gender issues, the rule of law and legal rights (covering land, resources, property, livelihood, etc.), social justice and other issues. Ethnic cleansing is more than an atrocity. It is a systematic policy aimed at the wholesale deportation of a targeted ethnic group or groups through the use of the coercive instruments of a State, for example, forced evacuation of a people from its homeland by the armed State forces. The ultimate goal is to empty the area of one ethnic group and resettle it with another; to drain a particular area of its ethnic population and take over their land and other resources. Ethnic cleansing is a war of ethnic aggression as it targets the unarmed population, especially women. Wholesale terror inflicted on the targeted ethnic group is aimed at traumatizing children, on whose shoulders rest its future survival and vigour.

3. The military Government of Myanmar has been trying to achieve the above-mentioned goals by making life unbearable for the Shan people. This involves all kinds of harassment: violations of all their rights (including livelihood and means of sustenance), the systematic employment of terror, the encouragement of lawless behaviour of the regime's armed forces, the killing of individuals and, most commonly, the mistreatment of women (rape) so as to humiliate the men and psychologically scar the children.

4. The military regime of Myanmar started its ethnic cleansing policy in early 1996 when some armed resistance movements refused to surrender but offered to sign a ceasefire agreement, an offer which was rejected by the military. In order to destroy those groups they subsequently started a large "relocation" campaign, mainly in the central Shan States. Since then hundreds of thousands of households have been moved from villages to "relocation centres". During this expulsion from their homeland many women have been raped, men have been forced to contribute "voluntary" labour, and many civilians (including Buddhist monks) have been killed by the soldiers. Appeals of resistance groups to be recognized as non-hostile forces have been rejected by the military regime which continues its offensive against them and against the civilians in the Shan States.

5. This shows that the Myanmar Government is not serious about restoring peace, and that its real intention is to empty the central region of the Shan States of their inhabitants. Many of those who survived the killings fled to Thailand where they were not recognized as refugees. The sudden downturn of the Thai economy has changed the situation for the worse. Now the forcibly

displaced people are faced with a terrible choice: to go back to the Shan States where they would be subjected to persecution, neglect and starvation, or to remain in Thailand and risk the danger of arrest and forced repatriation.

6. After a short respite during the monsoon season, the military regime continue the forced relocation of civilians from the Shan States. In Mongkung and in Kesi, 20 battalions are involved in this terrible operation which is affecting approximately 100,000 people. Since 1996, more than 200,000 villagers have been forced at gunpoint to abandon their homes and move to relocation sites near main roads and towns.

7. The latest development reported by the SHAN (Shan Herald Agency for News) on 10 March 1998 was that relief organizations trying to send food and medicine for the Shan refugees in Pang Yone (Pangmapha district in Maehongson province, Thailand) are being denied access to their makeshift camp.

8. To stop this policy of expulsion and ethnic cleansing, the Society for Threatened Peoples calls upon the Commission on Human rights to:

(a) Maintain pressure on the Government of Myanmar to respect human rights and humanitarian law with regard to all minorities in the country, especially in the Shan States;

(b) Recommend that the Security Council authorize a contingent of full-time United Nations human rights rapporteurs to observe and investigate human rights violations - especially forced relocations - in the Shan States;

(c) Recommend that the Security Council authorize a contingent of full-time United Nations human rights rapporteurs to observe and investigate the situation of refugees from Myanmar in Thailand. The Commission should call upon the Government of Thailand to refrain from repatriating the refugees until the human rights situation in Myanmar improves.

UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1998/NGO/103
31 March 1998

ENGLISH
Original: ENGLISH, FRENCH and
SPANISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 10(a)

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CYPRUS

Written statement submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization with special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[31 March 1998]

GE.98-11498 (E)

1. The Society for Threatened Peoples fears the development of a new trouble spot and possibly military conflict in the eastern Mediterranean. While the Government of the Republic of Cyprus prepares the building of air defence systems with Russian support, in order to defend itself against possible attacks, the Government of Turkey threatens the Cypriots with military retaliatory measures.

2. In July 1974 Turkish troops landed in northern Cyprus, after the Greek military regime in Athens had installed a fascist government against the will of the population. Despite the fact that a few days after the Turkish army's landing, democratic conditions were re-established they continued their offensive and occupied 36 per cent of the island. Over 3,000 people were killed by Turkish soldiers; 180,000 Greek Cypriots and those who lived with them, the small minorities of Armenians, Maronites and Latins, were expelled to the south. Since the Turkish offensive, 1,619 Greek Cypriots have been missing.

3. For five centuries the Turkish Cypriot population settled in all regions of the island, until they were voluntarily or forcibly concentrated in the north. Since 1974, Turkish Cypriots have left the northern part of the island under pressure from approximately 30,000 Turkish soldiers and a wave of new settlers from Anatolia. There are estimates from the Turkish Cypriot opposition that already about half of the Turkish Cypriots have emigrated to Australia, the United Kingdom or the United States.

4. Several hundred Greek and Maronite Cypriots stayed in the regions of Morphou and Karpassia. Their freedom of movement was considerably reduced and visits from relatives from the south were forbidden for over 15 years. Mistreatment and murder frequently occurred.

5. The cultural heritage of the former Greek Cypriot majority population was systematically destroyed, as was that of the three minorities of north Cyprus. Orthodox churches were destroyed, robbed or converted into barns. Valuable icons were stolen and sold in Europe or the United States. The only Armenian cloister, Sourp Magar (St. Makarios), was plundered and completely destroyed. The cloister, which is located in the mountains of Kyrenia, is reported to have been converted into a hotel by the Turkish Government.

6. Despite an agreement between the Cypriot Government and the regime of Turkish-occupied Cyprus to clarify the fate of the 1,619 Greek Cypriots who disappeared during the war in Cyprus no serious efforts are being made, while the official Cypriot side has begun to release information about several hundred Turkish Cypriots victims of the internal troubles in Cyprus in the 1960s.

7. Today, north and south Cyprus are hermetically sealed off from one another. The Turkish army and the Denktash regime have separated the island with walls and barbed wire. The Turkish side has prevented Turkish Cypriots from visiting the south and Greek Cypriots from the north, with few exceptions.

8. The Society for Threatened Peoples calls upon the Commission on Human Rights to:

(a) Reinstate freedom of movement for members of all five Cypriot nationalities on the whole island;

(b) Prevent the continuation of the destruction of the cultural heritage in north Cyprus and to make possible the reconstruction or renovation of destroyed Greek, Maronite and Armenian churches and cloisters;

(c) Protect the property of those who fled and were deported from north Cyprus;

(d) Carry out free elections on the whole island and limit the right to vote to legal Cypriot citizens;

(e) Secure the possibility of return of all refugees and deportees and make possible compensation for those who do not wish to return;

(f) Support negotiations for a federal solution of the Cyprus problem;

(g) Establish protection for minorities from the three small national groups on the whole island and grant the five Maronite areas near Morphou autonomous status;

(h) Put the Armenian cloister area of Sourp Magar (St. Makarios) under the administration of UNESCO and under the administration of a democratically elected Cypriot Government once it has been established.